SYNOPSIS

Quality of life of couples before and after adoption of child.

Reproduction and the desire of man to set up a family is one of the natural needs of mankind and one of the important pillars of social life. Infertility is inability to achieve pregnancy after one year of unprotected sexual relationship and accordingly, 20% of the couples in the world are infertile. As per National Family Health Survey (2007) covering 27 countries including India, the incidence of infertility is 12-13.5% among married couples and in Kerala it is 20%. In India where family relationships are much stronger than west, cultural implications of infertility has profound effects on couples, and may even question worthiness of woman. The effect of infertility related stress seems to be comprehensive on quality of life with profound impact on several psychosocial areas of human existence including marital and social relationships. Infertile couples experience marked stress in different dimensions, which alter their behavioural patterns and reproductive functions. The vicious cycle connecting psychological stress and infertility reveals that high levels of stress among couples causes hormonal imbalance and defective reproductive functions resulting in infertility. Adoption of child is found to break this cycle as it is noticed that some couples who are medically certified as infertile which is mandatory for adoption, spontaneously conceive after adoption. This study aims to investigate the perceived psychological distress, social adjustment and quality of marital life among Indian infertile couples before and after adoption and invites attention to the psychological component of infertility, so as to throw light into the possibility of spontaneous conception after adoption.

Objectives of the study

1. To measure the effect of adoption on rate of psychological distress before and after adoption among infertile couples**.**

2. To understand the relationship between psychological distress and socio demographic and clinical variables in relation to infertility.

3. To determine the levels of social adjustment among couples with infertility before and after adoption.

4. To understand the relationship of social adjustment with socio demographic and clinical variables of infertile couples.

5. To study the effect of adoption on quality of marital life before and after adoption among couples.

6. To study the moderating effects of socio demographic and clinical variables on quality of marital life of infertile couples.

7. To test whether the incidence of spontaneous conception after adoption is a reality or a myth.

Independent variable of the study

Independent variable of the study is adoption of child.

Dependent variables of the study

Dependent variables of the study are Psychological distress, Social adjustment and Quality of marital life among couples.

Hypotheses of the study

The following research hypotheses are formulated in this study.

1. Adoption of child results in reduction of level of psychological distress among couples.

2. The rate of psychological distress varies among couples at 3 months, 6 months and one year after adoption.

3. Selected socio demographic and clinical variables have influence on psychological distress among infertile couples.

4. Adoption enhances social adjustment among infertile couples.

5. Social adjustment level differs at 3 months, 6 months and one year after adoption among the couples.

6. Selected socio demographic and clinical variables explain variation in the levels of social adjustment among infertile couples.

7. Quality of marital life increases among couples after adoption of child.

8. The quality of marital life changes among couples at 3 months, 6 months and one year after adoption.

9. Selected socio demographic and clinical variables are influencing factors of marital quality among infertile couples.

10. Spontaneous conception among infertile couples can be explained in terms of better quality of life as a result of adoption.

Sample of the study

A total of 200 couples (100 each in experimental and control group) constitute the sample in the study. In the experimental group, 100 infertile couples who opt for adoption are included and 100 infertile couples who do not plan for adoption constituted sample for the control group. A purposive sampling technique is used in the study.

Design of the study

Quasi experimental pre post control group design is used for the study.

Tools used for data collection

The following standardised scales are administered for the study.

General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) 30 items version (Goldberg and Williams,1988) is used to measure the psychological distress among couples.

Social Adjustment Inventory (Raju,1989) is used to measure social adjustment among infertile couples.

Marital Quality Scale (Shah,1995) is used to measure marital quality among couples.

Socio Demographic Data Sheet and Clinical Data Sheet are developed to measure socio demographic variables and clinical variables of the couples.

Statistical analysis

The scores obtained are subjected to different statistical analysis. In order to understand the general trend of the sample, descriptive statistics such as Means and Standard deviations are used in the study.

Mean difference analysis is carried out using Critical Ratio to find out significant difference between pre test and post test data on all variables.

In order to assess the effect of adoption on variables and to determine the variation in the levels of variables at many points after adoption among the experimental group, test of ANOVA repeated measures is employed in this study.

Test of Least Significant Difference is used for Post hoc comparisons in this study to determine mean difference between pairs after determining significant difference between the means on the variables.

ANOVA one way test is used to find out relationship between selected socio demographic and clinical variables with dependent variables.

Findings of the study

The results of the study reveal that infertility is a cause for psychological distress among couples and adoption results in a remarkable reduction in distress. In both experimental and control groups as well as in different pre test post test conditions, females experienced more distress compared to males. It is evident from the results that adoption of child results in a significant reduction in the distress level of couples with infertility. Hence the hypothesis that child adoption reduces the psychological distress among infertile couples (H1-1) is accepted by the findings in the study. The present study reports that the distress level reduced at three months after adoption, slightly increased at six months and remarkably decreased by one year of adoption and this difference at three points is found significant. It is also found that post hoc comparison using test of least significance is significant between pre test and all the three post tests among the experimental group. Thus the hypothesis formulated in the study that the rate of psychological distress varies among experimental group at 3 months, 6 months and one year after adoption (H1- 2) is accepted. With regard to relationship between psychological distress and socio demographic and clinical variables of couples, it is found that gender, educational level and occupational status exert a moderating effect on the level of psychological distress experienced by infertile couples. These findings confirm the hypothesis (H1- 3) that selected socio demographic and clinical variables have influence on psychological distress among infertile couples. Therefore the present study points out that adoption is a remedy for decreasing psychological distress and in improving general wellbeing among infertile couples.

The present study indicates that infertility result in impaired social adjustment and adoption enhances social adjustment among couples. It is noted that in both

experimental and control groups as well as in different pre test post test conditions, females experienced less social adjustment than males. Hence the hypothesis that child adoption enhances social adjustment among infertile couples (H1- 4) is confirmed by the findings in the study. It is also evident from the results that social adjustment increased at three months after adoption, slightly decreased at six months and remarkably increased after one year of adoption. These variations reported are found to be significant. The post hoc comparison using test of least significance is also found significant between pre test and all the three post tests among the experimental group. The hypothesis formulated in the study that the social adjustment differs among experimental group at 3 months, 6 months and one year after adoption (H1- 5) is confirmed by the findings of the study. On analysing social adjustment in relation to selected socio demographic and clinical variables, it is noted that only gender emerged as a significant factor. This finding confirms the hypothesis that selected socio demographic and clinical variables explain variation in the level of social adjustment among infertile couples (H1- 6). So the study findings reveal that adoption results in better social adjustment and that by one year of adoption couples demonstrated the best level of social adjustment.

It is evident from the results of the study that infertility results in impaired marital quality and adoption increases quality of marital life of couples. The stress due to infertility has an impact on marriage adjustment and the quality of marital life of couples. It is observed that in both experimental and control groups as well as in different pre test post test conditions, females experienced lesser marital quality than males. The present study indicates significant increase in quality of marital life as a whole and in all the twelve subscale variables of marital quality among experimental group after adoption of child. Thus the hypothesis formulated in the study that quality of marital life increases among couples after adoption of child (H1- 7) is confirmed by

the findings in the study. The study also points out that the rate of marital quality increased at three months after adoption, shown an increasing trend upto six months and remarkably increased after one year of adoption. The post hoc comparison using test of least significance is also found significant between pre test and all the three post tests of the experimental group at three months, six months and one year after adoption. Hence the hypothesis that quality of marital life changes among couples at three months, six months and one year after adoption (H1- 8) is accepted. The findings of the study also revealed that out of socio demographic and clinical variables, gender is found as an influencing factor of marital quality among infertile couples. This confirms the hypothesis (H1- 9) that selected socio demographic and clinical variables are influencing factors of marital quality among infertile couples. So the results indicate that adoption results in better marital quality. The maximum level of marital quality is reported at one year after adoption among the couples.

The study also hinds that remarkable reduction in psychological distress, in turn improve social adjustment and quality of marital life among couples after adoption. Thus spontaneous conception after adoption can be explained in the light of better quality of life after adoption. The study results reveal that four out of hundred couples among the experimental group conceived spontaneously after adoption. Hence the hypothesis that spontaneous conception among infertile couples can be explained in terms of better quality of life as a result of adoption (H1-10) is accepted by the findings of the study. The increased general wellbeing experienced after adoption results in improved reproductive physiology, endocrinology and in higher fertility. The results of the study point out that the occurrence of spontaneous conception after adoption is a reality. One can explain the phenomenon of spontaneous conception after adoption meaningfully only with the help of psychological dimensions in the case of infertile couples.

Conclusions of the study

Based on analysis of data and the results in the study following conclusions are drawn.

1. Infertility is a major cause of psychological distress among couples and adoption of child result in reduction of distress experienced by infertile couples.

2. Psychological distress level varies at many points after adoption and it takes about one year to experience a significant reduction in distress level among couples after adoption.

3. Social maladjustment is associated with infertility and adoption enhances social adjustment among couples.

4. Increase in social adjustment differs at various points after adoption and maximum increase in social adjustment is found at one year of adoption.

5. Infertility results in impaired marital quality among couples and adoption make it better.

6. Marital quality steadily increases after adoption and the level is found maximum by one year of adoption.

7. Women among the couples experience higher stress, lower social adjustment and lower marital quality than men.

8. Spontaneous conception among infertile couples is a reality and it can be explained in terms of improvement in quality of life as a result of adoption.

9. Further studies are required to throw more light into the physiological and endocrine changes that are accompanied by adoption as a result of increase in the general wellbeing of couples.